

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2003

Introduced by Assembly Member Fong

February 20, 2014

An act to amend Sections 13307 and 14111 of the Elections Code, relating to elections.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2003, as introduced, Fong. Ballot materials: translations.

Existing law requires each county elections official to prepare separate sample ballots for each political party and a separate sample nonpartisan ballot, as specified. Existing law requires the elections official to send to each voter, together with the sample ballot, a voter's pamphlet that contains the written statements of each candidate. Existing law requires the elections officials to provide a Spanish translation to those candidates who wish to have one and requires that the person selected to provide that translation be from a list of approved Spanish-language translators and interpreters of the superior court of the county or from an institution accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

This bill would also allow the elections official to select an accredited translator registered with the American Translators Association to provide the translation.

Existing law requires the public posting of specified voting information at each polling place on the day of each election. Existing law requires the precinct board to post, in a conspicuous location at the polling place, at least one facsimile copy of the ballot with the ballot measures and ballot instructions printed in Spanish and facsimile ballots printed in other languages if a significant and substantial need is found by the elections official. Existing law requires that each translation of

the ballot measures and ballot instructions posted at the polling place be provided by a person selected by the elections official from the list of approved translators and interpreters of the superior court of the county or from an institution accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

This bill would also allow the elections official to select an accredited translator registered with the American Translators Association to provide the translation.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 13307 of the Elections Code is amended
2 to read:

3 13307. (a) (1) Each candidate for nonpartisan elective office
4 in any local agency, including any city, county, city and county,
5 or district, may prepare a candidate's statement on an appropriate
6 form provided by the elections official. The statement may include
7 the name, age, and occupation of the candidate and a brief
8 description, of no more than 200 words, of the candidate's
9 education and qualifications expressed by the candidate himself
10 or herself. However, the governing body of the local agency may
11 authorize an increase in the limitations on words for the statement
12 from 200 to 400 words. The statement shall not include the party
13 affiliation of the candidate, nor membership or activity in partisan
14 political organizations.

15 (2) The statement authorized by this subdivision shall be filed
16 in the office of the elections official when the candidate's
17 nomination papers are returned for filing, if it is for a primary
18 election, or for an election for offices for which there is no primary.
19 The statement shall be filed in the office of the elections official
20 no later than the 88th day before the election, if it is for an election
21 for which nomination papers are not required to be filed. If a runoff
22 election or general election occurs within 88 days of the primary
23 or first election, the statement shall be filed with the elections
24 official by the third day following the governing body's declaration
25 of the results from the primary or first election.

26 (3) Except as provided in Section 13309, the statement may be
27 withdrawn, but not changed, during the period for filing nomination

1 papers and until 5 p.m. of the next working day after the close of
2 the nomination period.

3 (b) The elections official shall send to each voter, together with
4 the sample ballot, a voter's pamphlet which contains the written
5 statements of each candidate that is prepared pursuant to this
6 section. The statement of each candidate shall be printed in type
7 of uniform size and darkness, and with uniform spacing. The
8 elections official shall provide a Spanish translation to those
9 candidates who wish to have one; and shall select a person to
10 provide that translation. *The person selected to provide the*
11 *translation shall be* from the list of approved ~~Spanish-language~~
12 *Spanish-language* translators and interpreters of the superior court
13 of the county ~~or, have an applicable translation degree~~ from an
14 institution accredited by the Western Association of Schools and
15 Colleges, *or be an accredited Spanish-language translator*
16 *registered with the American Translators Association.*

17 (c) The local agency may estimate the total cost of printing,
18 handling, translating, and mailing the candidate's statements filed
19 pursuant to this section, including costs incurred as a result of
20 complying with the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended.
21 The local agency may require each candidate filing a statement to
22 pay in advance to the local agency his or her estimated pro rata
23 share as a condition of having his or her statement included in the
24 voter's pamphlet. In the event the estimated payment is required,
25 the receipt for the payment shall include a written notice that the
26 estimate is just an approximation of the actual cost that varies from
27 one election to another election and may be significantly more or
28 less than the estimate, depending on the actual number of
29 candidates filing statements. Accordingly, the local agency is not
30 bound by the estimate and may, on a pro rata basis, bill the
31 candidate for additional actual expense or refund any excess paid
32 depending on the final actual cost. In the event of underpayment,
33 the local agency may require the candidate to pay the balance of
34 the cost incurred. In the event of overpayment, the local agency
35 which, or the elections official who, collected the estimated cost
36 shall prorate the excess amount among the candidates and refund
37 the excess amount paid within 30 days of the election.

38 (d) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to make any
39 statement, or the authors thereof, free or exempt from any civil or
40 criminal action or penalty because of any false, slanderous, or

1 libelous statements offered for printing or contained in the voter's
2 pamphlet.

3 (e) Before the nominating period opens, the local agency for
4 that election shall determine whether a charge shall be levied
5 against that candidate for the candidate's statement sent to each
6 voter. This decision shall not be revoked or modified after the
7 seventh day prior to the opening of the nominating period. A
8 written statement of the regulations with respect to charges for
9 handling, packaging, and mailing shall be provided to each
10 candidate or his or her representative at the time he or she picks
11 up the nomination papers.

12 (f) For purposes of this section and Section 13310, the board of
13 supervisors shall be deemed the governing body of judicial
14 elections.

15 SEC. 2. Section 14111 of the Elections Code is amended to
16 read:

17 14111. Translations of the ballot measures and ballot
18 instructions, as required by Section 14201, shall be provided by a
19 person selected by the elections official. *The person selected to*
20 *provide the translation shall be* from the list of approved translators
21 and interpreters of the superior court of the county ~~or, have a~~
22 *translation degree* from an institution accredited by the Western
23 Association of Schools and Colleges, *or be an accredited translator*
24 *registered with the American Translators Association.*